

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE  
TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE  
STATE OF HAWAI'I  
2006

PURSUANT TO SECTION 321-1.5, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES  
REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO PROVIDE AN  
ANNUAL REPORT ON INCENTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR  
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE INCENTIVE PROGRAM AND THE  
PRIMARY CARE ROUNDTABLE

PREPARED BY:  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
STATE OF HAWAI'I  
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## **BACKGROUND**

The State Legislature established a Primary Health Care Incentive Program through Act 41 of the Session Laws of Hawai'i 1992; new Section 321-1.5, HRS. This program was established within the Department of Health to assess and develop strategies to address the primary health care needs of medically underserved populations of Hawai'i. An integral component of this program was the creation of the Primary Care Roundtable that is a volunteer group composed of individuals interested in primary care issues. It acts in an advisory capacity to the Department of Health and the Legislature on primary health care issues.

The Family Health Services Division of the Department of Health provides staff support for the Roundtable. Funding for the staff comes primarily through the federal Primary Care Office grant. No funds are allocated by the state for the Roundtable.

Statewide meetings of the Roundtable are usually held three times a year via interactive television and video teleconferencing provided at the State Video Conference Centers. Also included are twelve rural hospital sites of the Hawai'i Health System Corporation. Supplemental meetings and briefings are called whenever appropriate.

## **ACTIVITIES OF THE ROUNDTABLE IN 2005**

During 2005, the Primary Care Roundtable activities focused on health workforce assessment and development. Much of the activities were handled through the Hawai'i Health Workforce Hui, which includes the Department of Health (DOH) Primary Care Office in Family Health Services Division; DOH State Office of Rural Health; State Health Planning and Development Agency; Hawai'i Area Health Education Center (AHEC); Hawai'i Primary Care Association; Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program; and Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation.

Due to a vacancy in the primary care planner position in Family Health Services Division since October 2004, the Roundtable held only one statewide meeting that provided a forum for reporting back on workforce assessment and development activities of the Workforce Hui. The purpose of the Hui is to improve access to quality healthcare in Hawaii by identifying health workforce needs and developing appropriate solutions. Objectives and activities are:

1. To perform an ongoing, coordinated, comprehensive assessment of health workforce needs in the state.  
Activities: Existing health workforce data is being compiled and a survey tool for assessing health workforce needs is being finalized. Plans for administering the statewide survey is also being finalized.
2. To facilitate health workforce recruitment and placement.  
Activities: Three major activities include the development of a marketing plan for recruiting health professionals; identification of successful recruitment models;

and leveraging of recruitment incentive programs such as the National Health Service Corps, J-1 Visa Program and the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program.

3. To expand retention strategies.  
Activities: Existing barriers to retention in Hawaii are being researched, and possible incentives are being explored.
4. To project future health workforce needs and develop a plan to meet identified needs.  
Activities: A baseline workforce assessment will be developed from the results of the upcoming comprehensive workforce assessment noted in item 1 above. Models for population projections and future workforce planning are being researched.

Roundtable members have provided input to Senate Concurrent Resolution 195, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, requesting the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) to identify and evaluate the barriers to community-based access to specialty care and to make recommendations to improve access to specialty care on the neighbor islands and in rural O`ahu. SHPDA is compiling an interim report to the Legislature for the 2006 Legislative Session.

The Hawai`i Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) described their recruitment and retention efforts for healthcare professionals at the Roundtable forum. As a baseline, HHSC has identified their shortage and “hard to fill” jobs by type of position, number of vacancies and turnover rate. Next they have developed several recruitment and retention activities such as advertising locally and on the mainland and providing information at job and career fairs. The HHSC incentive program includes relocation incentives for selected shortage classes that include traveling and moving expenses as well as housing allowance. HHSC obtained funding for a two year Hawaii Rural Development Project grant for the following programs: new nurse trainee; recruitment, retention and nursing specialty training; upward mobility; and online training for nurses. Finally, HHSC evaluates its recruitment and retention programs to continually improve their effectiveness.

## **PLANS FOR 2006**

The Roundtable and its membership are committed to continue taking an active role in making recommendations to the Department of Health and the Legislature. Future Roundtables will focus on strategies to improve health care access. The focus for 2006 will continue to be healthcare workforce assessment and development of successful recruitment and retention strategies.